

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Tuesday, October 2. 1711.

THERE is not a Man in this Nation that pays a greater Veneration to the Writings of the imitable *Spektator*, than the Author of the *Review*; and that not only for his Learning and Wit, but *especially* for his applying that Learning and Wit, to the true Ends for which they are given, *viz.* The Establishing Vertue, *in*, and the Shameing Vice out of the World; and I premise this, because what I am going to say, which tho' it may vary a little, yet is not design'd in opposition to what that Author has advanc'd, and I bespeak him not to take it so, I mean in the Case of an Inexorable Father, to a

Repenting, but Disobedient Daughter.

The *Spektator*, in his Paper N^o. Sept. gives us a Letter from a Young Lady, which to make my Story more plain, I must abridge thus.

" The Lady acquaints him, that at the
 " Age of 15, she chose for herself,
 " *that is, as I think it may be call'd*
 " *without Injustice, Marry'd against her*
 " *Fathers Consent* — That till that
 " Time, her Father was exceedingly
 " TENDER of her, and KIND to
 " her — But that this Action did
 " oblig'd

" oblig'd him SO, that he will never
" be reconcil'd to her.

" *To Palliate the Fact*, she says she has the
" *best* of Husbands, and fine Chil-
" dren, which she dwells upon, tho'
" that's nothing to the Case at all,
" not much noticing that she disoblig'd
" the *best* of Fathers; nor setting down
" any of the Circumstances of her Be-
" haviour in the doing it.

" *She Instances the Attempts she has made*
" *to obtain his Pardon, by Tears, cast-*
" *ing herself at his Feet, &c.* but al-
" ways has been reject'd with Indig-
" nation; That he would not see her,
" or bear to hear her Name mention'd,
" no, not when he thought himself
" going out of the World, would not
" see her little Child, or give it his
" Blessing; but, *in short*, has for ever
" irreconcilably Renounc'd her, as
" not worthy to be own'd for his
" Child.

I think I have abrig'd the Letter faith-
fully, and shall make amends if it be thought
I have not; whether the Letter be a Para-
ble, or a History, is not material to me;
but as the *Spectator* has given his Thoughts,
and told us a Story out of *Friberus* to the
purpose, Condemning the Father; I desire
the Favour of a Word on the other side.

1st. I allow, That we are oblig'd by the
Scripture Command, to forgive the
Trespases which others commit against
us; and the Petition in the Lords Prayer,
As we forgive those that Trespase a-
gainst us, seems to Incapacitate us to
Pray till we can sincerely do so; our
Saviour also makes it look as an absurd
Thing, that we should pray for For-
giveness without it — *For if ye*
forgive not Men their Trespases, How
shall your Heavenly Father forgive you?
Mat. 6. 14, 15.

2. I allow all that the *Spectator* hath said,
with relation to the Generosity and

Heavenly Temper of Forgiving, nor
will I object, even where I think I
might, because I would lessen no Man's
Temper to Forgive the Offences and
Trespases of others.

But I desire, in Favour to the Case of the
Parent, to suggest a few Things.

1. That there seems to me a manifest
difference, between the Obligation of
Forgiving the Injuries we receive from
a Neighbour, and the Forgiving the
Breach of Relative Duties, between
Children and Parents — And the
severe Commands of God upon Chil-
dren, with the Commination imply'd
in the Fifth Commandment upon the
Breach of it, plainly implies the differ-
ence I speak of.
2. That this difference in the Case, ar-
gues strongly, That as the Offences of
Children against their Parents, are
not the same with those of other
Men; so neither is the Obligation
to forgive the same — And
this is evident, from the Authority
given to the Parents in Scripture, to
bring their Disobedient Son to publick
Justice, which could not be, if at the
same Time he was bound to forgive
him — It is manifest, the Command
of Christ to Forgive, is set forth un-
der the Allegory of *our Brother*, inti-
mating, as I think, that this was a
Forgiveness upon an Equality of De-
gree — But the Disobedience of
Children to Parents, like that of Sub-
jects to a Prince, remain to be judicially
Resented; neither does the Command
of Forgiveness take Place here, at least
the Obligation to it cannot be the
same — This I give as my Opinion,
submitting it to the Judgment and
Censure of those, who are better
skill'd in the Divinity of the Thing.

I come next to the Philosophy of it; and
I own, that without doubt, it is a Token of
a Greatness of Soul, equal to a Hero, so to
Master

Master our Resentment of Injuries, as to Conquer the Breaches made upon us in that Case; but there is one Case which I must always reserve, as a Thing, perhaps a Peculiar to our Maker, *viz.* To Forgive the Sins against a *superlative Affection* — It is because he is GOD and not Man, that Sins against the Divine love can be forgiven; and 'tis because we are Men and not GOD, that we cannot always forgive the Offences committed against our Superiour Affections: There is no Sin so great, but God can forgive, because he is Infinite; but there are Sins so great against Man, as may be out of his Power to forgive, because he is not Infinite.

The Party before us, acknowledges the exceeding Tenderness of her Father before she disoblig'd him, *pray mark it*, proportion'd to the Greatness of his Affection, may be the Depth of his Resentment, as we always say, *the highest Love turns to the deepest Hatred*; if his Paternal Love lay at the bottom of his very Soul, the bitterness of the Insolence, which a Rebellion of that Nature shew'd to such an Affection, pierc'd to the same place, and therefore, perhaps cannot be Rooted out; NO, the Person himself may not be able to Root it out, any more than a Man can prevent or conquer Natural Sympathies and Antipathies.

For this Reason, Children who have the tenderest Parents, should be very wary of effectually disobliging them, *because*, if once thorowly offended, suitable to the greatness of the Affection, will be the Resentment; and as it is not a small Thing, that will wear a Powerful Affection, so that Affection once thorowly wean'd, may not be perhaps by the Person himself, *and if not by him, not by all the World*, to be re-plac'd.

Abused Love to return! Insulted Goodness to flow again! A slighted and reject'd Tenderness to continue tender! Contemn'd Affections to embrace the Object contemning! This is for God to do — Whose Mercy is Infinite above all his Works, and endures for ever: But for Men! who are

finite! who are but Men! — Govern'd, and indeed Compos'd of Passions and Affections! It cannot be! — Some may go higher, and be more Godlike than another; but there are degrees of Provocation, which it may be past the Power of Nature to forgive.

Nor will all the Submissions, Repentings, or Returnings of the Child, move in this Case; Nature retorts continually the Abhorrence of the Crime, and like a little Water upon a great Fire, it makes it burn more fierce.

I cannot say much to the Case publish'd, but I could publish some that would make good what I say; as to the particular Case, *if it be a Case*, I conceive the Parent has not Justice in the Relation; the several Circumstances of the Case being left out, as how it was done, with what Contempt she might Treat her Father, what Commands he might have laid upon her, and whether he might not have declar'd to her, *perhaps* *Vow'd*, that if she did so Marry, he would never own her again.

There also remains some Alleviation, as to the Thing call'd Forgiveness, and whether a Parent may not as a Christian, Forgive the Offence, and yet not as a Parent re-place her in his Affections; the first, I conceive he may do, the last, as above, I believe may be, in some Cases, out of the Power of a Parent, and to say otherwise, would be to make the Parent equal with God.

This I have offer'd, with a View to some sad Cases within my own Knowledge, and cannot but recommend it to those Children, who have affectionate tender Parents; that they should remember their Parents are Men, and not Gods; and that if by an ungrateful, disobliging Behaviour, they once wean them, it may not be in the Power, no, not of the Parents themselves, to be reconcil'd to them.

A D V E R

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of others. Few now will go to Sea or travel without it. The Certificates themselves any Gentlemen may see if they please.

Several Boxes are just now sent again into Sweden, and I hear the Czar's Physicians have order'd it into the Army. I wish some Merchants would send it into Denmark, it might do much good there, and large Profit to the Sender.

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